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Housekeepers' Chat

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J. S. Dept.

Tuesday, Nov. 27, 1928.

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

Subject: "Carving the Thanksgiving Turkey." (Information from "Practical Cookery and The Etiquette and Service of the Table.") Program approved by Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. D. A.

Bulletin available: Chimneys and Fireplaces.

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Once upon a time a young husband sent me an SOS. His young wife was cooking her first Thanksgiving dinner, and he was to carve the meat -- before all his in-laws! Such a predicament! He said he always had been rather shy and bashful, around his wife's relations, and he was so afraid he'd embarrass his wife on Thanksgiving day. Would I please tell him how to carve a turkey?

I sent him a Special Delivery letter telling him all I knew about carving. My first advice was to keep a stout heart, a stiff upper lip, and a steady hand, and not to look at his mother-in-law, till the meat was carved. He wrote me afterward that his oldest sister-in-law, who is a school teacher, complimented him on his "cool and collected manner, and the neatness and dispatch with which he dismembered the fowl."

First thing, this morning, I'm going to talk about carving in general.

Good carving sets are important. These come in various shapes and sizes. An 8- or 9-inch blade is recommended for all large roasts, and large fowls. Smaller sizes may be used for smaller game, and steaks.

The handle of the carving knife should be easy to grasp, and the blade should be long, thin, and sharp-pointed. The fork should be strong, with long tines, and a good guard. Keep the guard up, while carving.

Never try to carve, in a limited space. The platter should be large enough to hold the entire piece of meat, when carved, and to provide enough room so there will be no danger of spilling food on the tablecloth.

Insert the carving fork into the meat in such a way that it will steady the meat, while you're carving.

Always cut meat across the grain. Cut straight, thin, neat slices. Keep the meat compact while carving, so that after everybody's served, the meat left on the platter will not be jagged and rough.



When through serving, place the carving implements neatly on the platter.

Before you ask a guest to take a second helping, carve a few extra portions of meat. Don't carve more than is necessary, because cut meat dries out quickly.

Now I'm going to give you directions from my favorite cookbook for carving a fowl -- turkey, duck, goose, chicken, or whatever you have to carve.

First, have the fowl on its back on the platter, with its neck to the left.

Second, insert the carving fork at the point of the breast bone, holding the fork firmly with the left hand.

Third, cut off the leg. (Sounds brutal, doesn't it?) To cut off the leg, cut through the skin separating the leg from the body. Pull back the leg with the knife, and disjoint from the body.

Fourth, lay the disjointed leg on the platter, and separate the drumstick from the thigh, cutting from the inside. If the fowl is large, and you want to make more pieces, cut the meat from the thigh bone.

Fifth, cut off the wing. To do this, cut down from the top to the joint that attaches the wing to the body. Then insert the knife under the wing, and cut through the joint.

Sixth, carve the breast meat into thin slices.

Next, serve a piece of white meat and one of dark to each person, unless a preference is expressed. Serve dressing with each portion of fowl. If necessary, make an opening below the breast bone, in order to remove the stuffing.

That's all -- and if you have your own way of carving -- perhaps a better way than mine -- it's all right with me. The main thing is to get the turkey neatly carved, and served, so that we can enjoy it, and the mashed potatoes and gravy and cranberry sauce.

There are several things I want to mention today. The first is an Apple confection, which would be nice to fill Christmas gift boxes with. Ever hear of Apple bon bons made from apple paste? Thirty different kinds of apple confec- tions have been made from apple paste.

To make the paste, cook down strained apple pulp, until it is thick. Then sweeten it, cook it until it is clear, and dry it. The color will depend on the apples used. Artificial coloring may also be added.

When the apple paste is sufficiently dry, cut it in strips and squares, dip it in melted fondant, roll it in coconut or chopped nuts, or prepare it in any other attractive way. To make mint chips, flavor the paste with mint, and color it green.

Apple paste is easy to make, requires little sweetening, and it keeps well.

The first question is from a listener who wants reliable recipes for Chocloate Fudge and Nut Brittle. These candy recipes are in the Radio Cookbook. There are also directions, in the Radio Cookbook, for Fondant, Nut-Coated Marshmallows, Pralines, Parisian Sweets, Popcorn Balls, and Sugared Popcorn.

The next question is from a man who asks whether the Department of Agriculture has any information on building chimneys and fireplaces. Yes sir; there is a bulletin called "Chimneys and Fireplaces; How to Build Them." Want me to send you a copy?

Before I leave, I want to tell you about W. R. B's "winter garden." His "winter garden" is a large glass jar, containing moss from the woods, partridge berries, princess pine, and one or two very small ferns. He planted this miniature winter garden in the fall, gave it a good watering, and put the glass cover on the jar. He probably will not touch the garden until spring. Inside the jar he has a small world to itself, with its mists and its rainfall. But there are no frosts, and a temperate to tropical climate is maintained all the time.

When Billy saw the winter garden, he was entranced. "Are there fairies inside the jar?" he asked W. R. B.

"Well, perhaps," was the answer. "I have never seen the fairies, but the jar does contain a fairy garden."

Tomorrow: "The Holiday Table."

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